ATLAS
JOURNEY INTO UNKNOWN WORLDS
JULY
No. 20
JOURNEY INTO
UNKNOWN WORLDS
10¢
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THE SON OF RASPUTIN!
RWANA BROWN!
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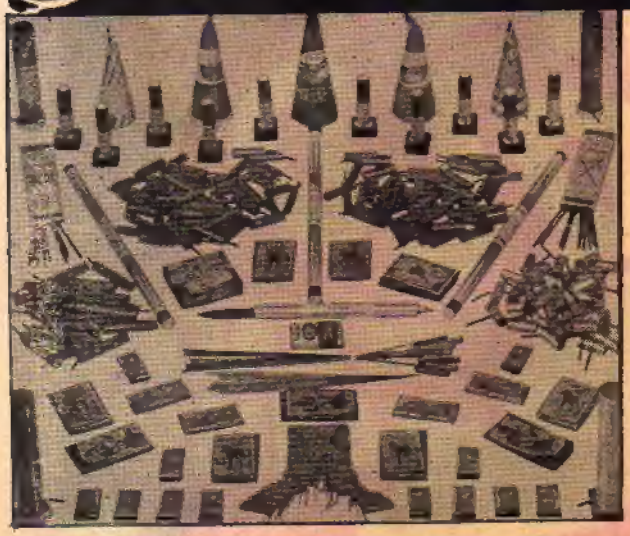

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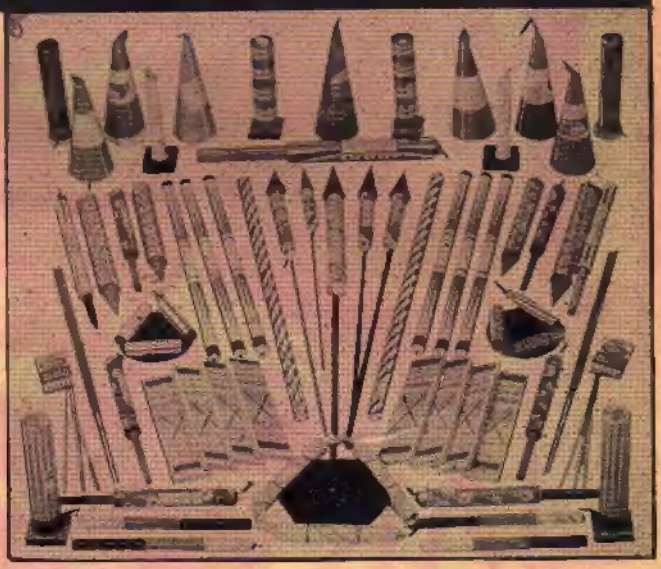

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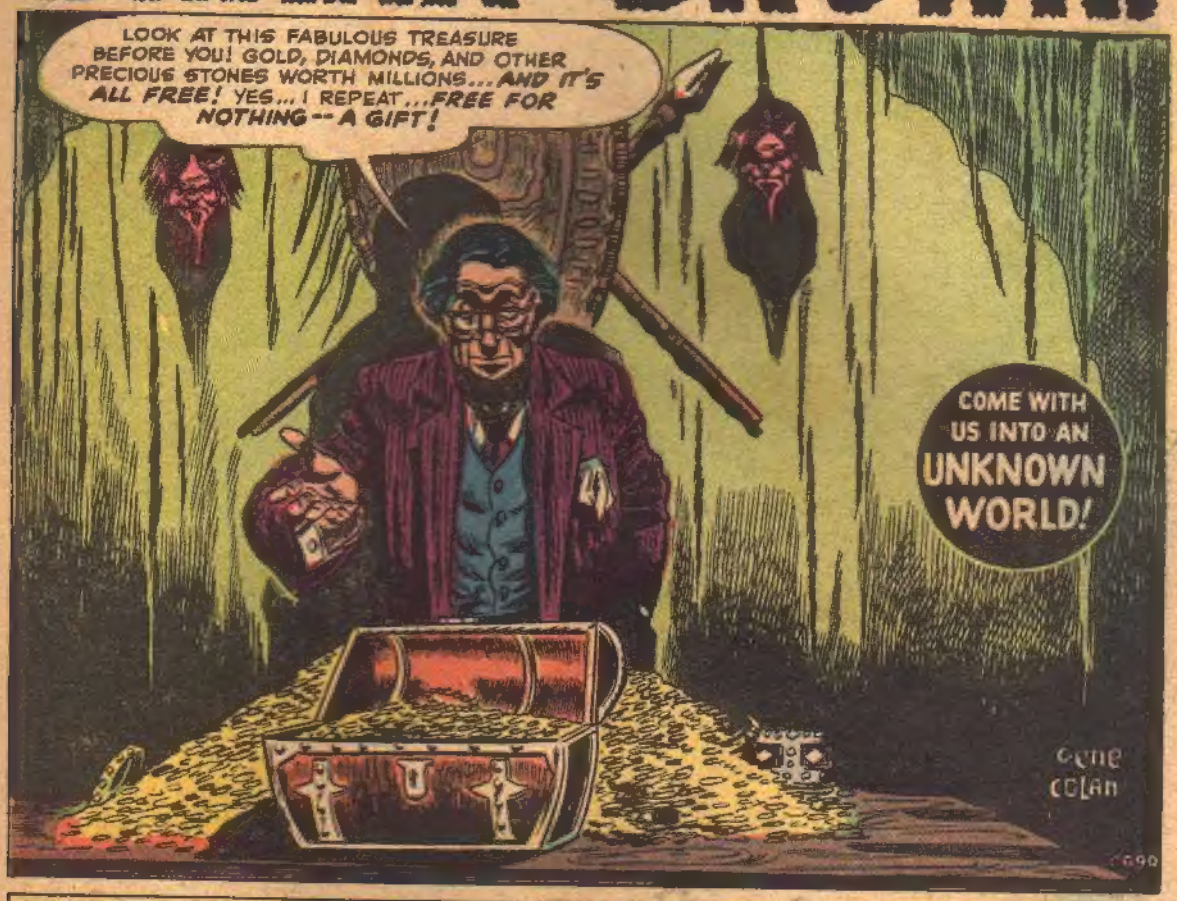
THERE ARE MANY UNKNOWN WORLDS YOU CAN ENTER...IF YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF BEING TRAPPED THERE FOREVER! ALEX STEELE WASN'T AFRAID OF THE KATO-KATO...BUT HE *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN!

BWANA BROWN!


LOOK AT THIS FABULOUS TREASURE BEFORE YOU! GOLD, DIAMONDS, AND OTHER PRECIOUS STONES WORTH MILLIONS... *AND IT'S ALL FREE!* YES... I REPEAT... *FREE FOR NOTHING -- A GIFT!*
COME WITH US INTO AN UNKNOWN WORLD!
Gene Colan

ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE MANHATTAN EXPLORERS CLUB RISE TO THEIR FEET IN AMAZEMENT...THEY HAD SEEN AND HEARD MANY FANTASTIC THINGS IN THEIR EXCITING LIVES AS EXPLORERS AND HUNTERS... BUT NEVER ANYTHING TO COMPARE WITH THIS...

WHAT IS THE TEST, BWANA BROWN?
YOU HAVE TO PROVE TO THEM THAT YOU AREN'T JUST A MERE MORTAL-- AND THAT YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER!
THAT'S SIMPLE ENOUGH! THOSE STUPID SAVAGES HAVE NEVER SEEN THINGS LIKE FLASH LIGHTS, MATCHES, RADIOS...
YES, THAT PART IS NO PROBLEM!
BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THE KATO-KATO TRIBE! WHERE IN AFRICA ARE THEY LOCATED?
THAT I CANNOT TELL YOU, GENTLEMEN! I GAVE THEM MY OATH THAT I WOULDN'T!
THE EAGER AND EXCITED MEMBERS OF THE EXPLORERS CLUB CROWD AROUND BWANA BROWN PLEADING FOR THE LOCATION OF THE TRIBE THAT GIVES AWAY FORTUNES IN GOLD AND DIAMONDS...
DON'T BE GREEDY, BROWN-- YOU'VE GOT YOUR SHARE!
YEAH... NOW LET US GET OURS!
I'D GIVE YOU HALF OF ALL I GOT!
I MUST REFUSE, GENTLEMEN... I CANNOT BETRAY THE KATO-KATO TRIBE'S TRUST IN ME! BESIDES... NONE OF YOU COULD PASS THEIR TEST! I CAME HERE BECAUSE YOU INVITED ME TO GIVE MY TALK... AND IF YOU THINK THAT IT IS GREED WHICH KEEPS MY LIPS SEALED-- YOU ARE WRONG!
AND TO PROVE IT, GENTLEMEN... BEFORE I BID YOU GOODNIGHT, I TOO WILL EXTEND AN INVITATION TO ALL OF YOU! PLEASE HELP YOURSELVES TO THE GOLD AND DIAMONDS ON THE STAGE!
LIKE A PACK OF WILD ANIMALS ATTRACTED BY THE SCENT OF BLOOD, THE EXPLORERS CHARGE TOWARD THE GOLD AND DIAMONDS PILED ON THE SPEAKER'S PLATFORM! THEY TRAMPLE EACH OTHER, THEY ARGUE, THEY FIGHT TO GET THEIR HANDS ON PIECES OF METAL AND GLASS WHICH NATIVES IN AFRICA REGARD ONLY AS TRINKETS...
2

BWANA BROWN LEAVES THE EXPLORERS CLUB AND HEADS FOR HOME... BUT ONE OF THE MEMBERS IS MORE INTERESTED IN BROWN... THAN IN GOLD...

HE MAY HAVE FOOLED THOSE NITWITS IN THERE... BUT HE ISN'T FOOLING ALEX STEEL! I KNOW HE GAVE THAT STUFF AWAY TO THROW US ALL OFF THE TRACK... SO THAT HE CAN HAVE THE KATO-KATO TREASURE FOR HIMSELF!

ALEX STEEL TRAILS BWANA BROWN THROUGH THE MAN-MADE CANYONS OF MANHATTAN, AND BY THE TIME BROWN REACHES HIS APARTMENT, ALEX HAS A DEFINITE PLAN HATCHED IN HIS CROOKED BRAIN...

I'LL WAIT UNTIL HE'S ASLEEP... THEN I'LL GET INTO HIS APARTMENT! HE MUST HAVE A MAP SHOWING WHERE THE TRIBE IS LOCATED! LET THOSE MORONS AT THE CLUB FIGHT OVER THAT SMALL CHANGE! WHEN I GET THE MAP, I'LL HAVE IT *ALL!*

HE WAITS AND WATCHES THE LIGHTS IN BWANA BROWN'S APARTMENT...

AND WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT...

ALEX WAITS SOME MORE AND THEN GOES UP...

...AND IN...

SQUEEEK

HE SNEAKS THRU THE APARTMENT WITH THE STEALTH OF A JUNGLE CAT AND RANSACKS THE PLACE WITH THE THOROUGHNESS OF A THIEF...

BUT IT ISN'T HERE... UNLESS HE'S GOT IT ON HIM!

YEAH... I WAS RIGHT! HE'S GOT A LEOPARD-SKIN POUCH AROUND HIS NECK... THE MAP MUST BE IN THERE!

AND TO GET IT -- I'M GONNA KILL HIM -- WITH ONE OF HIS OWN *SOUVENIRS!*

ONLY THE MOON IS A WITNESS AS ALEX DRIVES THE SPEAR INTO BWANA BROWN...

ONLY THE MOON SEES ALEX RIP THE LEOPARD-SKIN POUCH OFF BWANA BROWN'S NECK...

ONLY THE MOON WATCHES ALEX CLIMB DOWN THE FIRE ESCAPE...

ONLY THE MOON KNOWS OF ALEX STEEL'S CRIME...AND THE MOON CAN'T TELL...

THE NEXT DAY ALEX STEEL IS ON HIS WAY TO AFRICA ...HIS BAGGAGE CONSISTS OF ALL KINDS OF TRINKETS AND GADGETS OF THE MODERN WORLD WITH WHICH HE'S SURE HE'LL CONVINCE THE KATO-KATO SAVAGES THAT HE'S A GREAT IDOL...

THERE WAS NOTHING IN THE PAPERS THIS MORNING OF BROWN'S DEATH! HE LIVES ALONE...SO IT'LL BE DAYS BEFORE THEY FIND HIM...AND BY THAT TIME I'LL BE THE RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD!

WHEN ALEX LANDS IN AFRICA HE HIRES A NATIVE GUIDE AND TELLS HIM WHERE HE WANTS TO GO...

AND I WANT TO GET THERE IN A HURRY! CAN YOU TAKE ME THERE?

SURE...BUT NO HURRY! KATO-KATO TRIBE FAR AWAY... TAKE WEEKS... MAYBE MONTHS!

THAT'S TOO LONG! OUT OF MY WAY, YOU MISERABLE HUNK OF JUNGLE TRASH! I'LL FIND A FASTER WAY... I'VE GOT TO!

OW-W!

SMACK

ALEX HEADS BACK TO THE AIRPORT... AND WHEN HE GETS THERE HE MAKES ONE OF THE PILOTS A PROPOSITION...

...AND I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS IF YOU'LL FLY ME OVER THE AREA AND SO THAT I CAN BAIL OUT!

MISTER...FOR FIVE GRAND YOU CAN *HAVE* THE PLANE! I'M READY ANY TIME YOU ARE!

A SHORT TIME LATER, ALEX AND THE PILOT ARE AIRBORNE -- HEADING FOR THE LAND OF THE KATO-KATO TRIBE...

THIS PLANE WAS A TERRIFIC IDEA... AND WHEN THOSE SAVAGES SEE ME FLOATING DOWN TO EARTH OUT OF THE SKY-- THEY'LL BE CONVINCED THAT I'M AN IDOL!

HOURS LATER THEY REACH THE DROP AREA... AND ALEX BAILS OUT...
AS HE FLOATS DOWN TO EARTH HE SEES THE EXCITED SAVAGES GATHERING BELOW...
AND WHEN HE LANDS...
GREETINGS! I AM GREAT IDOL! YOU MUST DO AS I COMMAND!
I COME FROM SKY TO GATHER ALL YOUR YELLOW IRON AND STONES THAT SPARKLE! GO GET THEM... IRON BIRD IN SKY WILL COME BACK TO TAKE THEM AWAY!
YES...WE SEE! YOU COME FROM SKY! YELLOW IRON AND SPARKLE STONES BELONG ONLY TO IDOLS! YOU CAN PROVE YOU IDOL?
SURE! LOOK-- I MAKE FIRE FROM STICK... AND LIGHT FROM...
KATO-KATO TEST BEST FOR IDOLS! YOU FOLLOW US! YOU PASS TEST...ALL SPARKLE STUFF BELONG YOU!
OKAY!
THE TEST DOESN'T TAKE LONG...AND A FEW MINUTES LATER THE PROCESSION OF KATO-KATO TRIBESMEN GO TO THEIR LEADER WITH THE RESULTS...
TEST OVER! WHITE MAN WHO FALL FROM SKY BIG FAKE! NO PASS TEST!
THE FOOL! HE MADE ONLY ONE MISTAKE WHEN HE TRIED TO KILL ME! HE DIDN'T SUSPECT THAT I REALLY WAS IMMORTAL!
THE END

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN SUSPENSE STORIES LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

THE "GENIE"

GEORGE couldn't concentrate on his work at the office. All he knew was that this strange creature had come up to him, and said:

"You have one wish, George. You can make it up until midnight."

It had shocked the wits out of him. After all, it wasn't every day you saw a little man with three eyes and a horn in the center of his head. The little guy had said s o m e t h i n g about George's having helped him win a bet—something to do with the old flower-woman that he'd refused to help across the street—and the creature had to repay him by giving him one wish. That was the rule, he had said, and it had to be made before midnight. So you couldn't really *blame* him for not being able to concentrate on *accounts receivable* and the rest of the office work.

He was going slightly mad.

There was only one wish, and it had to be the right one. No rushing into it or anything, going around wasting it like those people in *stories* always did. There were so many things he really *needed*. He knew very well that he was the ugliest man in the world . . . and that his twisted limbs matched his face. He knew that people snickered when they looked at him, or turned their faces away so that they wouldn't have to look at him. *He* knew it. And he hated them for it. All of them.

Especially he h a t e d Shirly Krankheit, the gorgeous little blonde that worked the switchboard. For a long time George had worshipped her, but she poked fun at him like all the rest . . . and he hated her for it. Vehemently. And there was Mr. Kromberger up in Accounting. Kromberger always made cracks about him. And so did Frank Kelly, the office boy. He hated them all. It would really be some fun, he thought, to use that wish to make every one of them — maybe everyone in the whole world — die a violent horrible death.

But that would be a silly waste. What would it be? Handsomeness? Wealth? A beautiful wife? He couldn't decide. He just *couldn't*.

The bell rang for lunch, and George reached down in his desk and pulled out the paper bag that contained two home-made sandwiches. He opened the waxpaper, but he decided he wasn't hungry. Here it was 12:00 noon, and that left only twelve hours in which to decide.

"Three-eyes! Hey, you with the horn! Come on in!" he whispered, or rather just thought, *hard*, as the creature had instructed him if he wanted to contact him.

The bolt of lightning didn't startle or worry him, and neither did the billowing smoke that filled the office, as the thing appeared. George had been told that he, and only he could see or hear him — or anything that came with him.

"Yes, George?" said the little man.

"Uh — I mean, I'm not ready for the wish yet. I just wanted to ask you a question. You said I could, you remember."

"Yes?"

"Well, er — I mean, I just wanted to know something. What if I wished for Shirley Krankheit to fall in love with me. Could you do it?"

"Yes, I can do anything you want."

"Well, what I mean is, *how* would it work? How would you go about doing it?"

The spectral character grinned. "You're not missing a bet, are you George? All right. It's simple. I arrange for her to have an accident. Her face gets all smashed up. When she's the ugliest woman in the world, so that no one else will have her . . . she'll settle for you. You'll be all she could get."

The thought of what he had nearly wished for, almost made George sick.

"That's a pretty filthy trick," snarled George.

"Look, no one's *asking* you to make a wish."

That frightened George, and he kept silent for a while. Then he said. "What if I asked you to make me handsome? How would that work?"

"Likewise, simple," said the creature, "I'll arrange for you to get into an accident. One which will break just the right bones. Then we'll get a good plastic surgeon to fix you up. Of course, *you'll* have to *pay* for the operation with your life's savings, but you'll be real

CONTINUED BEFORE LAST STORY

POOR ALEX... HE CAME OUT AS THE HEAD MAN, BUT NOT A SOU IN HIS POCKETS! IN FACT, NO POCKETS! NOW LET'S CALL ON BORIS IN HIS LABORATORY! HE HAS MICE IN HIS LAB, AND BATS IN HIS BELFRY... AND RINGING BELLS ALL OVER THE PLACE! SOMEWHAT OF A MAD GENIUS, IN A NUTSHELL!

THE SON OF RASPUTIN

THROUGH MURKY FOG... 12 MILES FROM MOSCOW... A BARONIAL HOUSE BLEAKLY DOMINATED THE DISMAL LAND! INSIDE THE DARKLY PANELED WALLS, BORIS LACHOVA PACED GRIMLY, A STAGE DIRECTOR WITH MANY MOVES ON HIS CUNNING MIND! SUDDENLY, HE STOPPED, HIS EYES FLAMING COALS...

AH! MY LITTLE ACTORS... LITTLE WHITE MICE! PAVLOV WAS CORRECT IN HIS THEORY! THE CREATURES CAN BE DIRECTED... CONTROLLED TO ACT TO ANY SOUND! THE RING OF A BELL...

WHEN THEY HEAR THE BELL THEY PICK UP THE STICK! I'VE TRAINED THEM WELL! MASTER DIRECTOR... MASTER OF THE LITTLE CREATURES! WHY CAN'T I BE MASTER OF THE WOMAN, TOO... THE WOMAN I DESIRE?
JANG LE-JING

WHY CAN'T I TRAIN YOU, NATASHA? YOU, WHOM I WISH TO MAKE MINE! YOU WHO PREFER THIS INSIGNIFICANT ACTOR PETROV GLANSK TO THE GREAT LACHOVA! PROUD BEAUTY... TOO PROUD! I'LL WIN YOU, NATASHA! I'LL MAKE YOU MINE!

A CUNNING SMILE FLICKERED ON BORIS' THIN LIPS AS HE WROTE A BRIEF NOTE AND COMMANDED HIS VALET TO DISPATCH IT TO THE CZARICH REHEARSAL STUDIO IN MOSCOW! THERE NATASHA READ THE NOTE, AND CALLED OUT IN EXCITEMENT...

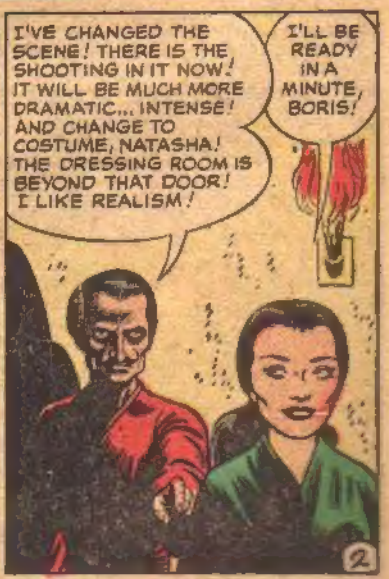
PETROV! I AM HAVING TROUBLE WITH THOSE SCENES FROM OUR NEW PLAY! BORIS LACHOVA WANTS ME TO COME TO HIS HOME FOR REHEARSAL!
DON'T GO THERE, NATASHA! DON'T GO TO BORIS LACHOVA!

THERE'S SOMETHING EVIL ABOUT HIM! HE'S LIKE A VILE RASPUTIN! LISTEN TO ME, BELOVED!
YOUR FEARS ARE MERE JEALOUSY! DON'T BE JEALOUS OF BORIS, MY DARLING! YOU KNOW I LOVE ONLY YOU!

OUR LOVE MUST NOT INTERFERE WITH OUR WORK! BORIS IS A GREAT STAGE DIRECTOR... A GENIUS! I CAN'T RISK REFUSING TO LEARN FROM HIM! I MUST GO!
NATASHA!

OVERHEAD, WILD BIRDS SCREECHED, AND THE SKY DARKENED MENACINGLY, AS NATASHA HURRIED TO THE HOME OF BORIS LACHOVA...

WE'LL REHEARSE HERE! WE'LL BEGIN WITH THE BIG SCENE WHERE YOU SHOOT HAGLIV, YOUR ADMIRER, AFTER YOU RECEIVE THE THREAT LETTER FROM HIM! YOU MUST GET THAT SCENE RIGHT, MY PET!
KILL HAGLIV? BUT, BORIS... THERE WAS NO SHOOTING SCENE IN THE SCRIPT!


I'VE CHANGED THE SCENE! THERE IS THE SHOOTING IN IT NOW! IT WILL BE MUCH MORE DRAMATIC... INTENSE! AND CHANGE TO COSTUME, NATASHA! THE DRESSING ROOM IS BEYOND THAT DOOR! I LIKE REALISM!
I'LL BE READY IN A MINUTE, BORIS!
2

IN A ROOM CONTAINING INNUMERABLE CURIOUS COSTUMES, NATASHA DRESSED TO CONFORM TO HER PLAY-ACTING...

DO I LOOK THE PART?

PERFECT! YOU'RE WILD... UNTAMED! BUT AFTER YOU KILL HAGLIV, YOU FIND A NEW ADMIRER WHO TAMES YOU! ...HERE IS THE GUN! NOW... BEGIN!

REPEATEDLY, NATASHA REHEARSED... THE DEFIANT STEP TO THE TABLE... THE GUN...

NO! NO! NO! YOU DON'T PULL THE TRIGGER IN TIME! REMEMBER, THE TARGET IS HAGLIV! YOU HATE HIM!

I'M TRYING, BORIS! I THOUGHT IT WAS GOOD ENOUGH!

AH, I HAVE AN IDEA! I SHALL RING THE BELL! WHEN YOU HEAR THE BELL SHOOT! THAT'S YOUR ***CUE!*** YOU UNDERSTAND, MY PET?

YES, BORIS... WHEN I HEAR THE BELL...

SHOOT! NO! NO! YOU WAITED TOO LONG! WE'LL TRY AGAIN! WHEN YOU HEAR THE BELL...

I'LL DO IT RIGHT THIS TIME, BORIS!

NOW YOU HAVE IT! BUT YOU MUST ***REHEARSE*** THIS ***MANY TIMES!*** THE RESPONSE MUST BECOME PART OF YOU! A LIVING, VIBRANT PART OF YOU!

JAN-GLE

CLOUDS BURST IN THE BLACKENING SKY, AND RAIN SWEPT AND SWIRLED ABOUT THE BLEAK BARONIAL HOME! THE WILD BEAT OF RAIN, THE JANGLE OF A BELL, THE SHOT OF A GUN... THESE MADE THE NIGHT SOUNDS!

PERFECT! PERFECT TIMING!

JANGLE JANGLE BANG

NOW, MY PET, TAKE A SHORT REST! BUT KEEP IN MIND THE RINGING OF THE BELL... AND THAT YOU ***MUST SHOOT!*** NEVER LET THAT LEAVE YOUR MIND! NOW I HAVE A MATTER TO ATTEND TO!

... A NEW SCENE TO WRITE!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE...

WHILE NATASHA KEPT PRACTICING HER INSTRUCTIONS... AT HIS DESK THE SATURNINE DIRECTOR SCRAWLED OUT ANOTHER MESSAGE!

GEORGIO! WHERE IS THAT VALET? GEORGIO!

I'm at Boris' home. Need you, come at once! The door is unlocked, ring the bell and walk in. Natasha

DELIVER THIS MESSAGE TO PETROV OLANSK AT ONCE! AND, GEORGIO, I HAVE NO FURTHER NEED OF YOUR SERVICES FOR 2 MONTHS! THIS MONEY WILL MEET YOUR EXPENSES! GO!

YES, MASTER! I SHALL FIRST DELIVER THE MESSAGE AT ONCE!

AGAIN THE STRANGE REHEARSAL BEGAN! TRANCE-LIKE NATASHA BECAME ONCE MORE THE STRANGELY WILD CHARACTER CREATED IN THE FEVERISHLY CUNNING MIND OF THE RASPUTIN-LIKE DIRECTOR!

I'VE REVISED THE SCENE...YOU FIRE AT THE DOOR! I'LL STAGE IT SO OUR CHARACTER HAGLIV WILL BE STANDING THERE... PERFECT! *PERFECT!*

JANGLE.. JANGLE... SHOOT... SO EASY... SO EASY...

JAN. GLE

MEANWHILE, PETROV HURRIED TO HIS BELOVED NATASHA.. FEARFUL THOUGHTS TORTURING HIS MIND!

SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG HERE! NATASHA'S MESSAGE WAS URGENT! EVEN HER HANDWRITING... SO SCRAWLED... AS IF SHE WERE TERRIFIED! THAT SCOUNDREL BORIS! AT THE RING OF THE BELL, I'M TO WALK RIGHT IN...

THE HARSH CLATTER OF THE BELL...

PERFECT TIMING! SHE DOESN'T KNOW ACTUALLY WHAT SHE IS DOING! SHE IS ENTRANCED BY THE BELL... THE COMMAND!

BA

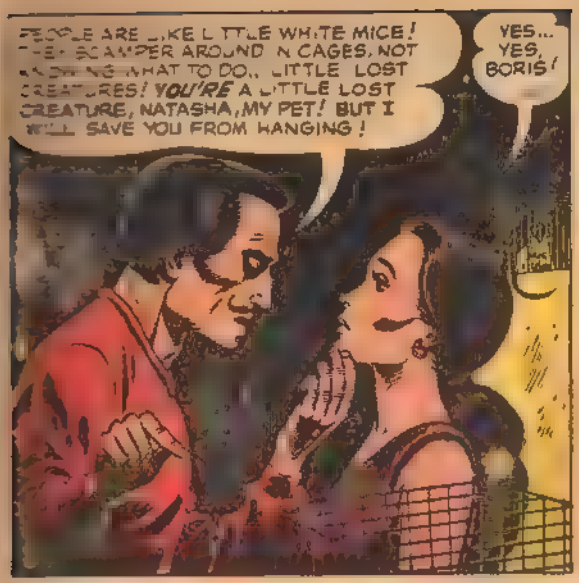
...PETROV! I KILLED HIM!

NOW SHE IS AWARE... BUT IT'S TOO LATE! I AM *MASTER* OVER HER! SHE IS IN A TRANCE ...LIKE THE LITTLE WHITE MICE... SHE HAS BEEN HYPNOTIZED..

DAZEDLY, NATASHA TURNED TO THE MASTER OF THE MIND... THE WILL! HER EYES GLAZED, HER TORTURED MIND IN A CONFUSED WHIRL, SHE WAS LED BY HIM...

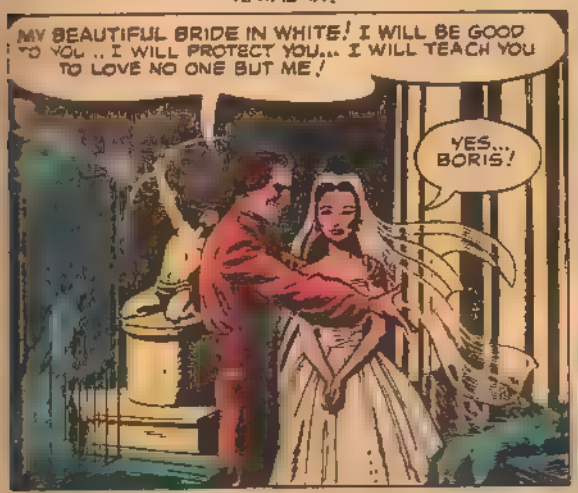
I HEARD THE BELL... I FIRED WHEN I HEARD THE BELL! BUT THE CZAR'S SOLDIERS WILL HANG ME!

NO, NO, MY PET! I WILL PROTECT YOU! NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW ABOUT PETROV! NOW YOU COME WITH ME.. I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU!


PEOPLE ARE LIKE LITTLE WHITE MICE! THEY SCAMPER AROUND IN CAGES, NOT KNOWING WHAT TO DO.. LITTLE LOST CREATURES! YOU'RE A LITTLE LOST CREATURE, NATASHA, MY PET! BUT I WILL SAVE YOU FROM HANGING!
YES... YES, BORIS!

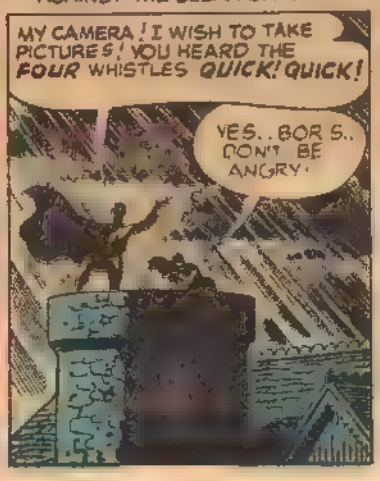
THEN, IN THE DARK CELLAR OF THE BARONIAL HOUSE...

PETROV'S DISAPPEARANCE WAS NEVER QUESTIONED! IT WAS BELIEVED BY EVERYONE THAT HE HAD GONE OFF TO JOIN A TRAVELING ACTING TROUPE! BORIS MARRIED NATASHA!



IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT I KEEP HER UNDER A HYPNOTIC TRANCE... FOREVER! FOR ONLY THEN WILL SHE IMAGINE SHE LOVES ME! SHE MUST BECOME LIKE ONE OF MY WHITE MICE... COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON ME!

THE HYPNOTIC TRAINING CONTINUED! OFTEN ON THE TOWERED ROOF OF THE SPRAWLING HOUSE, TWO FIGURES WERE STRANGELY ETCHED AGAINST THE BLEAK SKY!

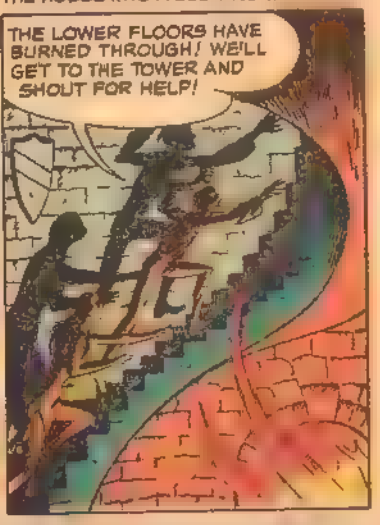


AND LIKE RASPUTIN, BORIS DELVED DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO THE MYSTERIES OF HYPNOTISM, NEVER CEASING HIS EXPERIMENTS!

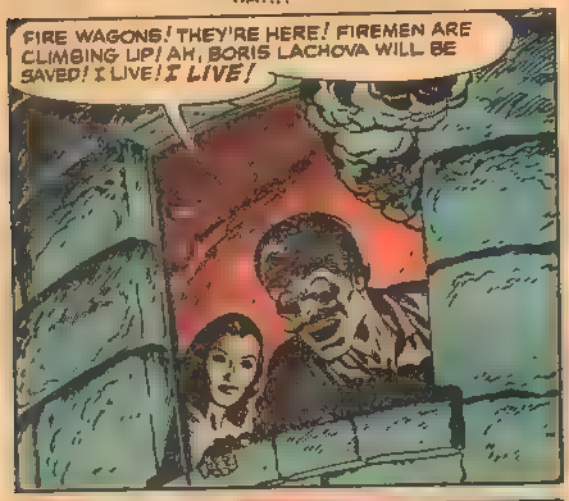
A NEW LESSON, MY SMALL CREATURES! I TAP A HAMMER... YOU LEAP THROUGH THE HOOP! IN A LITTLE WHILE I SHOULD BE ABLE TO HYPNOTIZE THE ENTIRE WORLD!
5

BUT THEN, DISASTER STRUCK!

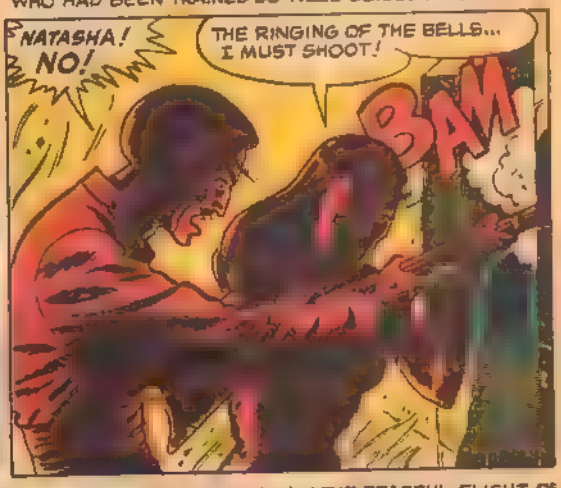
FLAMES SPREAD SWIFTLY, TURNING THE HOUSE INTO A GLOWING INFERNO!



AS FLAMES TURNED THE DISMAL SKY INTO BURNING RED, THE COUNTRYSIDE WAS ALERTED! RESCUE WAS ON THE WAY...



BUT SUDDENLY THROUGH THE CRACKLE OF FLAMES, ANOTHER SOUND WAS HEARD... THE *RINGING* OF THE *FIRE-BELLS!* IN AN INSTANT, THE CREATURE OF BEAUTY WHO HAD BEEN TRAINED SO WELL SEIZED A RIFLE!



IN HORROR, BORIS LACHOVA SAW THE FEARFUL FLIGHT OF HIS RESCUERS! THE RAMPAGING FLAMES ENCIRCLED HIM! HE FELT THE TORTURING SEERING OF THE FLESH... BEFORE THE END!

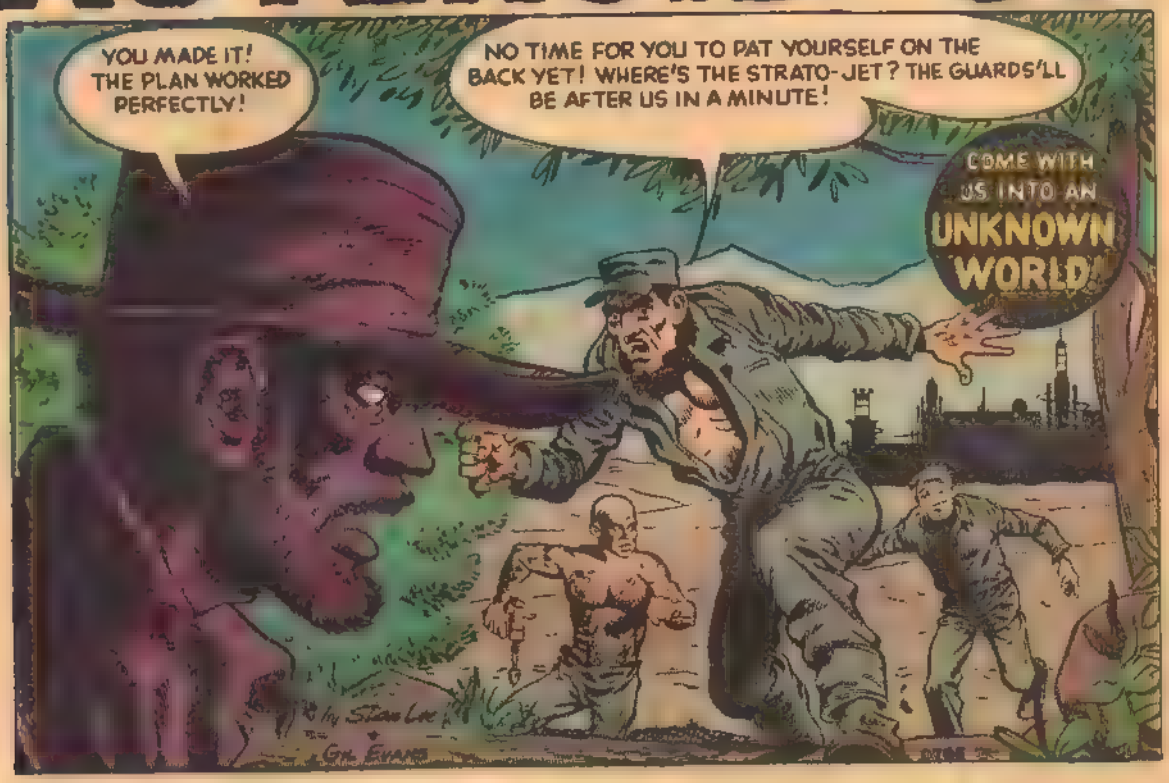
...AND WHAT OF NATASHA? SOME INSIST THEY SAW A STRANGELY CROUCHED FIGURE LEAPING OUT TO A NEARBY TREE, AND THEN DISAPPEAR INTO THE FOREST! BUT WHO CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN... WHO KNOWS?

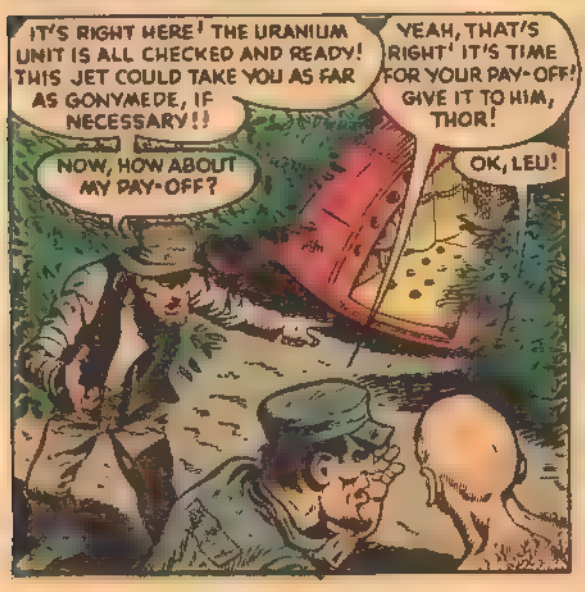
THE END

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN SUSPENSE STORIES LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

BORIS WAS A DIE-HARD RIGHT TO THE BITTER END, WASN'T HE? NOW LET'S JOIN A TRIO OF PRISON ESCAPEES...THE QUESTION IS: WHERE TO HIDE? THE ANSWER LIES SOMEWHERE OUT IN SPACE, SO GET ON YOUR SPACE SUITS AND SET THE ROCKET CONTROLS; WE'RE OFF!

THE SECRET OF ASTEROID #85!


YOU MADE IT! THE PLAN WORKED PERFECTLY!
NO TIME FOR YOU TO PAT YOURSELF ON THE BACK YET! WHERE'S THE STRATO-JET? THE GUARDS'LL BE AFTER US IN A MINUTE!
COME WITH US INTO AN UNKNOWN WORLD!
by Stan Lee
Gil Evans


IT'S RIGHT HERE! THE URANIUM UNIT IS ALL CHECKED AND READY! THIS JET COULD TAKE YOU AS FAR AS GONYMEDE, IF NECESSARY!!
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S TIME FOR YOUR PAY-OFF! GIVE IT TO HIM, THOR!
NOW, HOW ABOUT MY PAY-OFF?
OK, LEU!

GOOD SHOT, THOR! A NEURON-GUN BLAST IS A LOT CHEAPER THAN GOLD . AND IT LASTS LONGER!
LET'S BLAST OUTTA HERE, LEU, WHILE WE STILL CAN!
WHISSSTTT!!!

THREE HOURS AND THOUSANDS OF MILES LATER.....
WELL, WE'VE ESCAPED BUT WHAT HAPPENS NOW? EVERY INHABITED PLANET IN THE GALAXY WILL BE ALERTED AND WATCHING FOR US!
WE'RE NOT GOING TO AN INHABITED PLANET! WE'RE GOING TO ASTEROID # 85!
ASTEROID # 85!!??! THAT'S SUICIDE!
DON'T BE A FOOL, JONN! I DON'T BELIEVE THOSE OLD WIVES' TALES ABOUT NOBODY EVER RETURNING ALIVE FROM 85!
WELL, I GOTTA ADMIT IT'S ONE PLACE THEY WON'T LOOK FOR US! NOBODY WOULD DARE LOOK ON THAT ASTEROID!
I STILL DON'T LIKE IT! I GOTTA FEELIN'... A BAD FEELIN'!
TOO LATE TO TURN BACK... WE'RE LANDIN'!!! GRAB YOUR ANTI-SHOCK STRAPS!
LEU! YOU'RE COMIN' IN TOO FAST! WE'RE GONNA CRASH!
I CAN'T SLOW DOWN!! THE ANTI-GRAVS ARE JAMMED!
THERE!! THEY'RE RELEASED NOW!!
BUT IT'S TOO LATE!! WE'RE STILL GONNA CRACK-UP!
CRASH!!
WE'RE ALIVE! ALIVE!!
BUT LOOK AT THE SHIP! WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO LEAVE THIS ASTEROID WHEN THE HEAT'S OFF!
WE'RE TRAPPED! TRAPPED ON 85! I KNEW IT WOULD HAPPEN! WE'RE AS GOOD AS DEAD!
2

SHUT UP!! YOU MAKE ME SICK, YOU SNIVELIN' WEAKLING!
LOOK!! LOOK OVER THERE!!
WE'RE SAVED! IT'S A ROCKET SHIP!! THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE ON THIS ASTEROID!
GRAB YOUR BLASTERS! WE'LL ATOMIZE THE CREW AND HIJACK THE SHIP FOR OURSELVES!
IT'S A STRANGE LOOKING SHIP!
WONDER WHAT PLANET IT'S FROM?
IT DOESN'T EVEN LOOK AS IF IT'S FROM THIS GALAXY!
LOOK...THE DOOR'S SWINGING OPEN!
GET IN... QUICK! THIS IS OUR CHANCE!
IT'S EMPTY IN HERE! THERE'S NOBODY INSIDE!
YOU'RE SPACE-HAPPY! SOMEBODY MUSTA OPENED THE DOOR!
LEU... I.. I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING!
WHAT IS IT?
SUPPOSE THIS ISN'T A ROCKET SHIP AT ALL!
SUPPOSE THERE IS LIFE ON ASTEROID 85!
WHAT IS TO STOP THE INHABITANTS OF 85 FROM LOOKING LIKE ROCKET SHIPS?
WHAT IF THAT WAS A MOUTH WE STEPPED INTO INSTEAD OF A DOOR! WHAT IF THE RAMP WAS A TONGUE! WHAT IF... ARGGGGGG!!!
GOOD GUESS, THOR! TOO BAD IT'S TOO LATE!

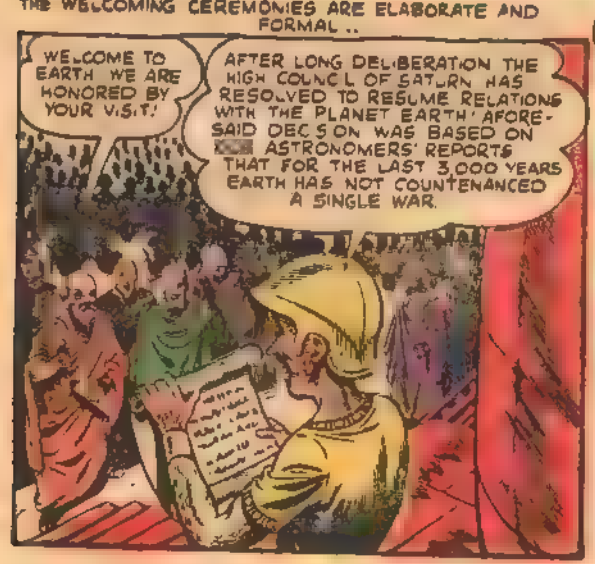
ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN SUSPENSE STORIES LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

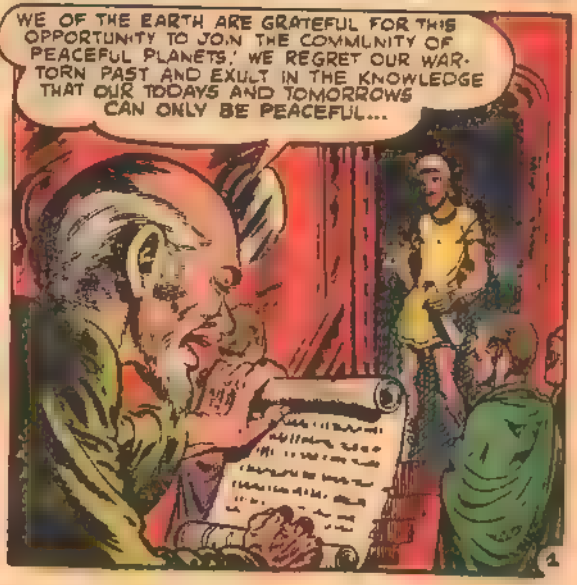
LET'S STAY IN THE FUTURE FOR A WHILE... AND JOIN THE DELEGATION WELCOMING A MAN FROM SATURN! *YOU* ARE *THERE*, AS THE VISITOR IS TAKEN ON A TOUR OF INSPECTION OF THE PLANET EARTH AND LEARNS WHY *WAR* BECAME A THING OF THE *PAST!* INTERESTING, N'EST CE PAS, EH?

A MONUMENT TO MORTIMER!

THE LAST TIME WE RECEIVED VISITORS FROM SATURN WAS WAY BACK IN 2031...
YES I REMEMBER THAT WAS EXACTLY FOUR YEARS BEFORE *MORTIMER THE GREAT!*
MORTIMER SNAPELY OUR GREATEST HERO....
COME WITH US INTO AN UNKNOWN WORLD!

THE WELCOMING CEREMONIES ARE ELABORATE AND FORMAL..


WELCOME TO EARTH WE ARE HONORED BY YOUR V.I.S.I.T.!
AFTER LONG DELIBERATION THE HIGH COUNCIL OF SATURN HAS RESOLVED TO RESUME RELATIONS WITH THE PLANET EARTH. AFORE-SAID DECISION WAS BASED ON ASTRONOMERS' REPORTS THAT FOR THE LAST 3,000 YEARS EARTH HAS NOT COUNTENANCED A SINGLE WAR.

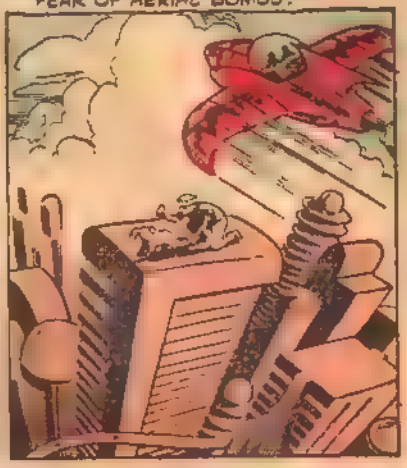

WE OF THE EARTH ARE GRATEFUL FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY OF PEACEFUL PLANETS. WE REGRET OUR WAR-TORN PAST AND EXULT IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT OUR TODAYS AND TOMORROWS CAN ONLY BE PEACEFUL...

AS THE WIND-UP OF THE CEREMONY, THE SATURNIAN IS TAKEN ON A WHIRLWIND TOUR OF SOME OF THE WONDERS OF THE PLANET EARTH

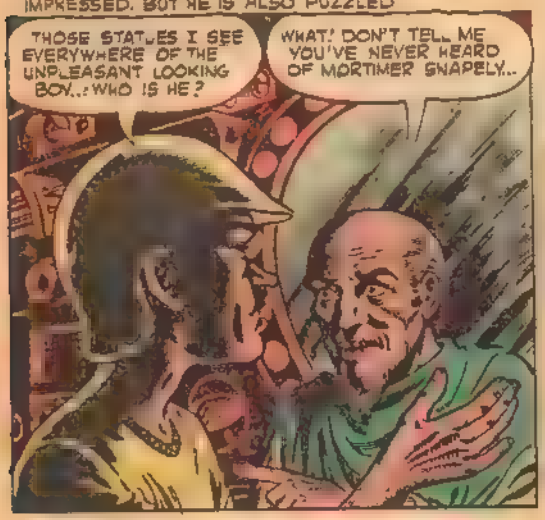
FIRST...A HUGE DAM IN THE MIDDLE OF A TRACT OF LAND THAT WAS ONCE CALLED THE SAHARA DESERT!

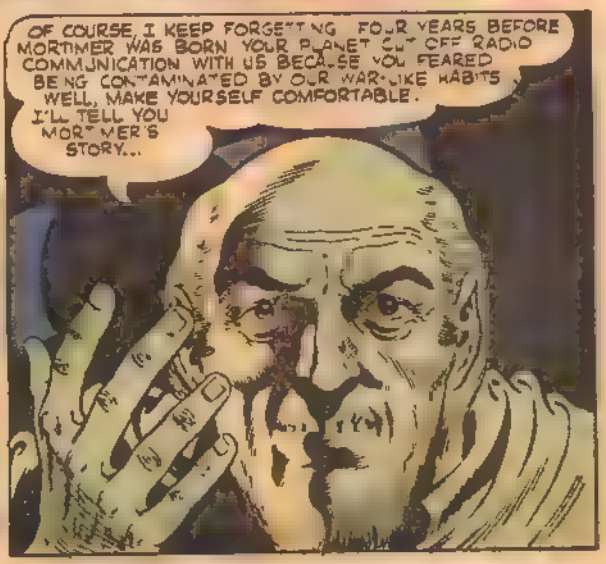
SECOND...A ROBOT-OPERATED FACTORY WHERE HEAVY MACHINERY FOR PEACEFUL PURSUITS IS MANUFACTURED FOR THE ENTIRE PLANET!

AND THIRD...A SKYSCRAPER 4,962 STORIES HIGH...AN INSPIRING SYMBOL OF EARTHMAN'S FREEDOM FROM FEAR OF AERIAL BOMBS!

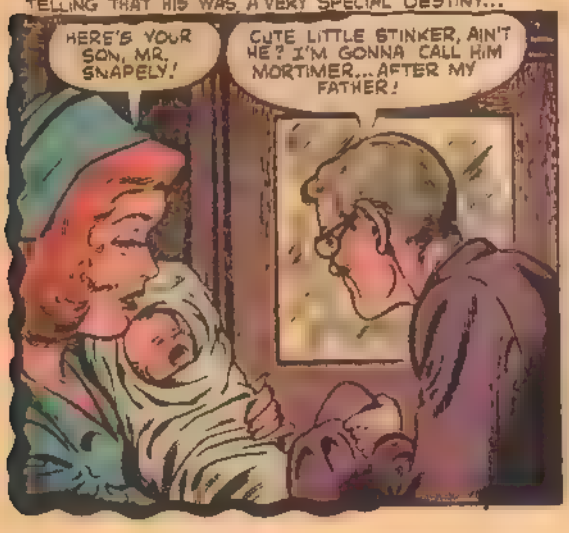


THE TOUR IS FINISHED, AND THE VISITOR IS VISIBLY IMPRESSED. BUT HE IS ALSO PUZZLED


THOSE STATUES I SEE EVERYWHERE OF THE UNPLEASANT LOOKING BOY...WHO IS HE?
WHAT! DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF MORTIMER SNAPELY...


OF COURSE, I KEEP FORGETTING FOUR YEARS BEFORE MORTIMER WAS BORN YOUR PLANET CUT OFF RADIO COMMUNICATION WITH US BECAUSE YOU FEARED BEING CONTAMINATED BY OUR WAR-LIKE HABITS WELL, MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE. I'LL TELL YOU MORTIMER'S STORY...

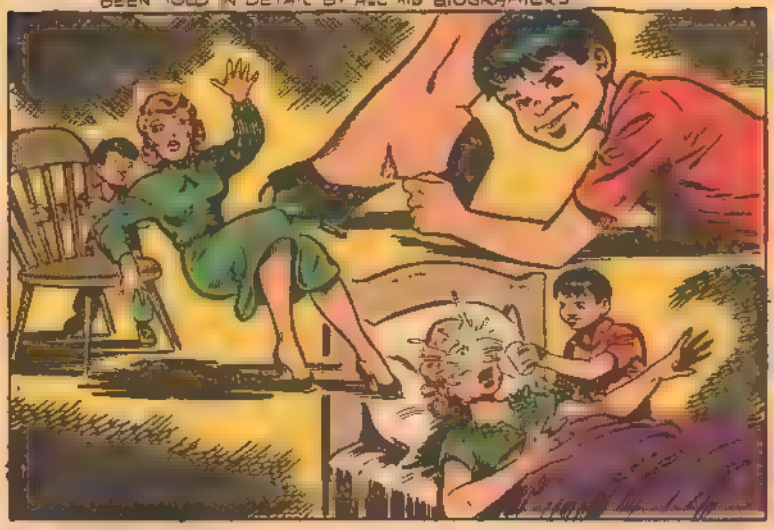
"HE CAME INTO THE WORLD LIKE EVERY OTHER INFANT... SQUAWLING AND KICKING...AND THERE WAS NO WAY OF TELLING THAT HIS WAS A VERY SPECIAL DESTINY..."



"MORTIMER STAYED IN THE HOSPITAL NURSERY FOR TEN DAYS BEFORE HIS PROUD PARENTS TOOK HIM HOME! ON THE EIGHTH DAY THE NURSE-IN-CHARGE THREW HERSELF FROM THE WINDOW. THERE IS NO DEFINITE PROOF THAT MORTIMER CAUSED HER DEATH.. BUT ONCE YOU EXAMINE THE PATTERN OF HIS LATER LIFE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO THINK OTHERWISE..."

"ONCE HOME, MORTIMER BEGAN GROWING, AND HIS PERSONALITY BEGAN TO DEVELOP. BY THE TIME HE WAS TWO, THERE WAS NO DOUBTING THAT HE WAS THE MEANEST, MOST DESTRUCTIVE CHILD EVER BORN ON EARTH. LITERALLY THE DEATH OF EVERYTHING HE LAID HIS HANDS ON..."

"THE TORTURES HE INFLICTED ON HIS GOVERNESS, MISS STAUNTON, HAVE BEEN TOLD IN DETAIL BY ALL HIS BIOGRAPHERS."



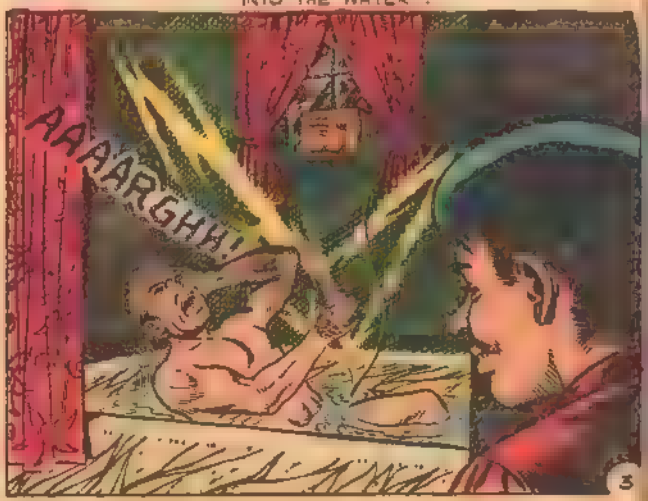
"MISS STAUNTON WAS MADE OF STERN STUFF! SHE LASTED FOUR YEARS BEFORE SHE BURST A BLOOD VESSEL..LITTLE MORTIMER SMILED DELIGHTEDLY AT HER FUNERAL..."

"HIS MOTHER TOOK OVER. SHE WAS AN AILING WOMAN.. HAD A BAD HEART. THE THEORY IS THAT MORTIMER CAUSED HER DEATH BY SUBSTITUTING TABLE SALT FOR THE POWDERS THAT FOUR HEART SPECIALIST HAD PRESCRIBED FOR HER DAILY..."

"AFTER SHE DIED, MORTIMER'S FATHER ALMOST WENT OUT OF HIS MIND! IT DID NOT TAKE LONG FOR GRIEF TO CHANGE TO HATE.."

AND I'M SENDING A LETTER TO THE POLICE COMMISSIONER, SO IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ME, THE POLICE WILL COME TO TAKE YOU AWAY...!
(SOB')..
(SOB!)...

"TWO MONTHS LATER, MORTIMER'S FATHER WAS ELECTROCUTED IN THE BATHTUB WHEN SOME WIRING IN THE BATHROOM RADIO INEXPLICABLY LOOSENED AND SUDDENLY DANGLED DOWN INTO THE WATER."



"BUT THE POLICE HAD THE DEAD FATHER'S LETTER! AND THEY CAME TO TAKE MORTIMER..."

GIT MOVIN, YOU ROTTEN LITTLE DEVIL! IT'S GONNA BE JAIL FOR THE REST OF YOUR NATURAL LIFE FOR THE LIKES OF YOU!

"BUT THE POLICEMAN WAS WRONG. IN FACT, HE HAD ONLY A FEW MINUTES LEFT TO LIVE FOR INSIDE THE PATROL CAR, MORTIMER SUDDENLY PUSHED HARD AT THE STEERING WHEEL, AND LEAPED OUT A SECOND BEFORE THE FATAL CRASH...

WHAT THE...?

POLICE

"MORTIMER WAS SMILING AS HE RAN AWAY! HE DID NOT KNOW THAT HE WAS RUSHING DIRECTLY INTO THE PATH OF A SPEEDING TRUCK...

CRASH!

AIEEEEEEEEE!

THUD!

"THEN DEATH CAME TO BEAR MORTIMER'S SPIRIT AWAY... AND MORTIMER LEFT THE EARTH AS HE HAD COME ONTO IT... KICKING AND SQUAWLING...!"

4

THE GUIDE HAD BEEN TALKING FOR A LONG TIME! HE STOPS NOW TO LIGHT A CIGARETTE...

BUT I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND! WHY DO YOU HAVE ALL THESE STATUES...? WHY IS THIS LITTLE BRAT SUCH A HERO?

I KEEP FORGETTING THAT YOU'VE BEEN OUT OF TOUCH WITH EARTH SO LONG... THE EXPLANATION IS SIMPLE. IT'S ONLY BECAUSE OF MORTIMER THAT WE NO LONGER HAVE WARS, THAT WE CAN CONCENTRATE ON PEACEFUL PURSUITS

YOU STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND...? WHY, MY FRIEND, SHOULD WE CONDUCT WARS WHEN NOBODY CAN DIE ANY MORE? DON'T YOU REMEMBER MY TELLING YOU THAT DEATH CARRIED MORTIMER AWAY? WELL... MORTIMER MUST HAVE BEGUN WORKING ON HIM IMMEDIATELY! HOW HE DID IT, WE'LL NEVER KNOW, BUT HE DID IT... MORTIMER SNAPELY WAS THE *DEATH OF DEATH...!*

THE END

ATLAS FOR THE BEST IN SUSPENSE STORIES LOOK FOR THE ATLAS SEAL ON THE COVER! ATLAS

handsome."

"Ugh!" gasped George. He noticed the wicked smile on the other's face. "Couldn't I ask for getting handsome without pain or losing my money?"

"No. That would be three wishes. We're not allowed to combine."

"But," insisted George, "isn't there one wish that will solve all of my problems?"

Silence.

"Isn't there?"

"Yes, there *is*."

"Well," urged George. "What is it?"

"*That* wish has to be made blind. But I wouldn't wish for it if I were you. I'm sure that if you knew what it was you wouldn't ask for it."

George studied the creature carefully. Was he spoofing him? Was he just trying to trick him out of making a very *good* wish? Or was it something that he really wouldn't have taken if he knew about it. He thought, and thought.

"How about money," he said, finally. "How would that work? I'll bet there's a drawback to that one toto, like all of the rest. Huh?"

The creature's middle eye closed, as if in meditation, and then finally he said. "Couldn't get you more than $100,000.00. you know."

"But *how?*"

"I'd fix it up for you to rob the payroll tomorrow night. You'd have the money, but of course you'd get caught and go to jail for ten years. But when you came out—"

"Enough! Stop it already! You aren't giving me a wish to help me. Everything I wish for I get, but I lose more than that. Can't I combine a wish . . . like having the money and not going to jail?"

"I've told you already. That would be two wishes, and all you're getting is one wish. The trouble with you, is that you're so selfish and hateful that you can't think of a wish to help someone else. Or asking for something nice, like giving you a better disposition. Just money, handsomeness, and beautiful women. Well, if you want those you're going to have to pay for them."

"How about eternal life?" asked George. He'd been racking his brain instead of listening to the guy. "Could I have that?"

"What for? Life is so horrible for you now. Why would you want to have it like that forever?"

George nodded, absently. He was right. There was nothing for him to do. He laughed to himself at the thought of using his one wish — only one rotten little wish — for somebody else's benefit. There had to be a way to get something out of this. Something that would solve all of his problems in one lump . . . all of his rotten life, his ugliness, lack of money, and need for female companionship.

He wondered about that *special* wish. The one that he had to take without knowing what it was. The creature had advised him against it, but maybe that was just because he didn't like him and was trying to keep him from getting anything good out of the wish. He was a nasty character, and it was certainly obvious that he didn't like him. And if he said it would solve all of his problems, what could be wrong. It was certainly better than all of those other crazy things. Yes that was it. He'd take the gamble and ask the strange little man with the horn in the center of his forehead and the green eye, for the secret wish.

"I'll take the wish you told me about. The one that'll solve all of my problems."

"Is that final? Are you sure that's the one you want?"

"Yes."

"Even though I warned you against it?"

"Yep!"

"All right. You have it. It'll come true sometime today."

So saying, he disappeared. George wondered.

It was later that evening when he was walking to the station from work, that he saw the huge truck bearing down on him. He froze in his tracks, and the truck hit him. In that split second when life changes into death, poor George of the twisted body, and warped mind, knew what he had wished for. The solution to all of his problems. *Death!*

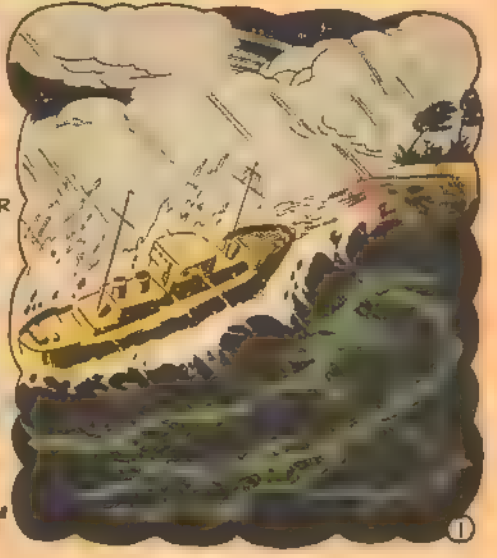
THE END

HORRORS! WE'VE NEARLY REACHED THE END OF OUR JOURNEY... BUT LET'S TREK INTO ONE FINAL UNKNOWN WORLD AND SEE WHAT KIND OF CREEPS ARE CRAWLING AROUND IN THE BUSHES! KEEP YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU... THERE'S DANGER BEHIND EVERY ROCK AND TREE ON THE LOST ISLANDS!

THE RACE THAT VANISHED

IN THE WORLD-FAMOUS MUSEUM OF MANKIND...

"LAST MONTH, THE FREIGHTER POLARIS WAS DRIVEN OFF TS COURSE BY A VIOLENT STORM AND REACHED A SMALL GROUP OF ISLANDS WHICH SAILORS NEVER KNEW EXISTED!"

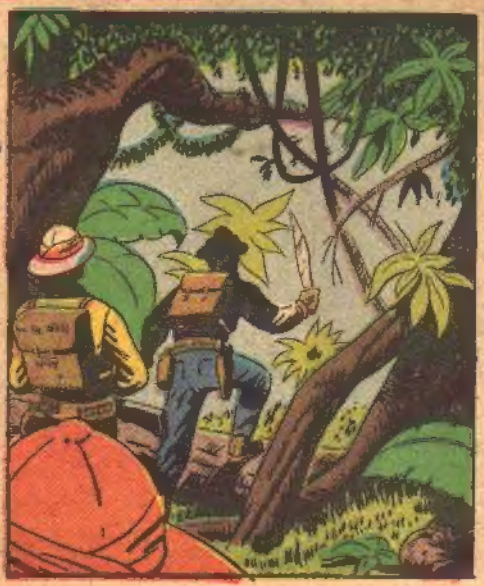


IT SEEMS INCREDIBLE THAT IN OUR TIME THERE SHOULD STILL BE UNDISCOVERED ISLANDS IN THE OCEANS OF THE WORLD!
WHEN THAT STORM PASSED OVER, THE POLARIS RETURNED TO ITS COURSE, BUT THE CAPTAIN RECORDED THESE SO-CALLED "LOST ISLANDS" ON HIS MAP...NOW, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED US TO ARRANGE AN EXPLORATORY EXPEDITION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!
WE MAY FIND AMAZING THINGS THERE! ONE MAY WELL WONDER WHAT FORM OF LIFE OR SOCIETY EXISTS IN THIS "LOST WORLD," BY-PASSED BY MODERN CIVILIZATION!

WINSLOW, YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED BY THE MUSEUM BOARD TO LEAD THIS EXPEDITION...YOU'LL BE WELL SUPPLIED WITH WHATEVER EQUIPMENT YOU MAY NEED...
IT'S A GREAT OPPORTUNITY, SIR! THANK YOU!

TWO MONTHS OF FEVERISH PREPARATIONS FOLLOWED BY TEN DAYS ON THE SEA, BROUGHT ROLLO WINSLOW AND HIS ASSOCIATES TO THE "LOST ISLANDS" AT LAST!

EAGER TO FACE THE UNKNOWN DANGERS OF THE BROODING JUNGLE, WINSLOW LED THE LINE OF ARMED MEN INTO A FOREST OF THICK TREES AND HUGE BUSHES...

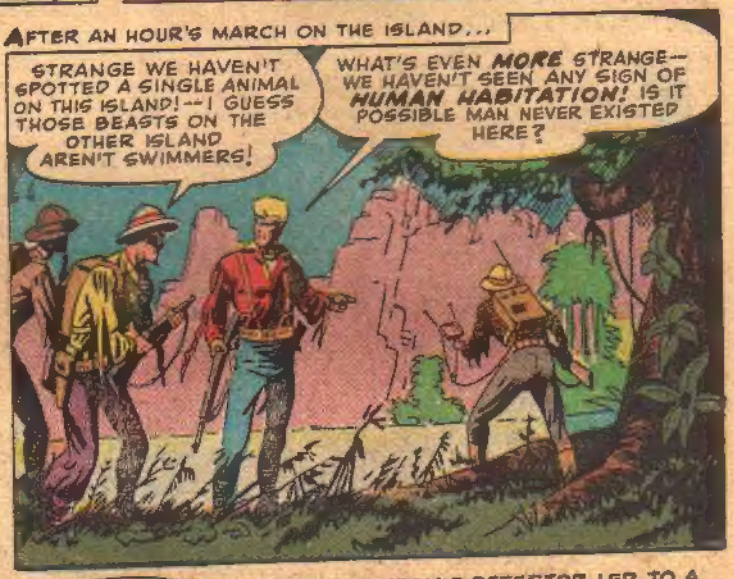


HEY! THAT PLANT! IT--IT'S GRABBING ME!
DON'T LOSE YOUR WITS, COLLINS! I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT!
IT'S CARNIVOROUS...PREYING ON ANIMAL FLESH! THERE...THAT DOES IT! NOW MOVE OUT OF ITS REACH!
A CLEARING JUST AHEAD! THANK GOODNESS! I'D HATE TO WALK INTO THE WAITING ARMS OF ANOTHER OF THOSE KILLER PLANTS!
SPEAKING OF KILLERS! LOOK AT THOSE WILD BEASTS!
TH-THEY'RE FREAKS!
BAM BAM AROWR
AIEEE!
HEAD BACK THE WAY WE CAME, TO THE BEACH! HURRY! THERE MAY BE MORE BEASTS LURKING NEARBY!
BLAM
3

EVERYONE INTO THE AMPHIB... QUICKLY! THOSE KILLERS ARE RIGHT ON OUR HEELS!

HEAD FOR THAT ISLAND OVER THERE! WE'LL LOOK IT OVER WHILE THE INJURED MAN IS RETURNED TO THE SHIP!

WHEN THE INJURED MAN IS SAFELY ABOARD, COME BACK HERE AND WAIT ON THE BEACH FOR US, SPENCER! WE'RE GOING TO MAKE AN EXCURSION INTO THE INTERIOR MEANWHILE!
RIGHT YOU ARE, SIR!


AFTER AN HOUR'S MARCH ON THE ISLAND...
STRANGE WE HAVEN'T SPOTTED A SINGLE ANIMAL ON THIS ISLAND!--I GUESS THOSE BEASTS ON THE OTHER ISLAND AREN'T SWIMMERS!
WHAT'S EVEN MORE STRANGE--WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANY SIGN OF HUMAN HABITATION! IS IT POSSIBLE MAN NEVER EXISTED HERE?

MOMENTS LATER...
PROFESSOR WINSLOW... COME QUICKLY! I'VE JUST PICKED UP A VIOLENT REACTION ON THE ATOMIC DETECTOR!

ONLY A METAL OBJECT COULD CAUSE A REACTION LIKE THAT! SEE IF YOU CAN PINPOINT ITS EXACT LOCATION!

THE ATOMIC DETECTOR LED TO A CERTAIN SPOT, AND...
DIG DEEP, MEN! WHATEVER THAT METAL OBJECT IS, IT MAY GIVE US A VALUABLE CLUE TO THE HISTORY OF THIS "LOST WORLD"!

AFTER TWO HOURS OF INTENSE EXCAVATION...
WE'VE FOUND IT! IT'S A HEAVY METAL TUBE!
WE'LL RIG UP A HOIST AND RAISE IT! I MUST EXAMINE IT!
AND SOON...
IT'S MAN-MADE! NOW WE HAVE PROOF THAT HUMAN BEINGS DID LIVE HERE AT ONE TIME! THIS IS A GREAT DISCOVERY, MEN!
WHATEVER WE FIND INSIDE THAT TUBE MAY CLEAR UP THE WHOLE MYSTERY OF THESE "LOST IGLANDS"... WHAT THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS HERE WERE LIKE, AND HOW THOSE FREAKISH WILD BEASTS CAME INTO EXISTENCE!
WHEN THE CONTENTS OF THE TUBE WERE SPREAD ON THE GROUND...
AMAZING! THESE PRIMITIVE OBJECTS ARE THE ONLY EXISTING RELICS OF A FORMER CIVILIZATION ON THIS "LOST ISLAND" WHEN HUMANS LIVED HERE! APPARENTLY A DEVASTATING CATASTROPHE -- PERHAPS WAR -- DESTROYED ALL HUMAN BEINGS HERE CENTURIES AGO!
THIS PART OF THE WORLD WAS ABANDONED AND FORGOTTEN BY NEW GENERATIONS OF PEOPLE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD... AND IN TIME, ONLY MUTATED, FREAKISH PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE CONTINUED TO EXIST HERE!
PERHAPS SOME SCIENTIST OF THIS ANCIENT LAND FEARED AN ALL-DESTRUCTIVE WAR, SO HE BURIED THESE TYPICAL OBJECTS OF HIS CIVILIZATION TO REVEAL TO FUTURE MEN HOW THEY ONCE LIVED!
UNKNOWN WORLDS
This time capsule was buried on Long Island during a world's fair...1939 Not to be opened until the year 2439.
TO BE OPENED IN 2439, EH? WELL, WE'RE JUST A FEW YEARS OVERDUE!
THE END
5
SO OUR VOYAGE ENDS FOR THIS MONTH! BE SURE TO JOIN OUR NEXT JOURNEY INTO UNKNOWN WORLDS, WHEN WE'LL MEET "THE MOST HATED MAN IN THE WORLD!" AND MANY OTHER FASCINATING CHARACTERS! SEE YOU THEN, BETWEEN THE COVERS OF NEXT MONTH'S THRILL-FILLED ISSUE!